CHECK POINT™

The Easy Way to M&A:

Merging Networks After an Acquisition

You can sum up what it's like for companies undergoing a merger or acquisition in just two words: it's complicated. There are numerous details to take care of from questions of corporate culture to regulatory requirements to, yes, Information Technology. Harmony SASE can make the latter part of this process as painless and seamless as possible.

Securing networks is no small task when an IT team is faced with managing disparate networks with different authentication methods, on-prem locations, and cloud providers, all while maintaining network stability.

Some companies may prefer to keep the networks separate—especially helpful when we're talking about an acquisition that will remain a subsidiary. However, when the acquired organization is going to be absorbed by the parent company then a complete merger of the two networks often makes sense.

Harmony SASE can help in both scenarios, acting as the bridge between multiple company networks. This makes it much more efficient to bring together varying cloud and on-prem resources into a single location, saving valuable time and resources.

Whether merging one, two, or three networks the basic strategy remains the same:

- **Gain control and visibility over the new networks**

- **Move the new company under the Harmony SASE umbrella as a separate network**

- **Align identity providers (IdP) and implement single sign-on (SSO)**

- **Begin the transition to a single network**

Gain Control and Visibility

"Once you understand everything in the acquired company's network and gain access to control those endpoints and services, the next step is more likely to go smoothly."

The first step is to assess the acquired company's network. Creating a transactional map helps with this by identifying what the network contains and how users and data interact within it. This may have been done to some extent during the original M&A process; however, it's always good to verify that the information is still valid, and that no new services, servers, or appliances have been added or removed.

The final inventory list should include all important assets and resources that are inside the network such as primary data centers, and the various cloud services that the acquired company uses. In addition, user devices should take up a second list.

The point of this step is not only to understand what the various assets are inside a network, and how to manage them, but also to reveal commonly used applications or systems in common with the parent company. These can often be the first points where companies can merge or speed up some of the changes. A shared cloud provider, for example, may have easy ways for two accounts to merge into one, allowing you to view all company assets from a single account.

In addition to understanding what you have, it's critical to dig into the state of in-house servers. Are they up to date on patches, for example? Are there any issues in the logs that may indicate the presence of threat actors? How many legacy applications are running on outdated servers that will need to be moved over as-is, or is this merger a chance to modernize the systems of the acquired company?

Once you understand everything in the acquired company's network and gain control of the endpoints and services, the next steps are more likely to go smoothly.

Align Identity Providers and Implement SSO

> **"Harmony SASE supports all of the major identity providers such as Azure Active Directory, Auth0, Google, Okta, OneLogin, and JumpCloud."**

One of the most helpful things about using Harmony SASE to align networks is that the two companies don't necessarily need to start out with the same IdP. Harmony SASE supports all of the major identity providers such as Azure Active Directory, Auth0, Google, Okta, OneLogin, and JumpCloud.

To start, the acquired company can authenticate with their current logins to maintain network stability, and then IT can gradually start moving the new workforce and its applications over to the company's standard IdP.

It is highly recommended hat you use an IdP that supports SSO, which will make it easier to integrate with cloud providers and reduce the number of times employees have to login per day.

Moving to the Harmony SASE umbrella

Now we're ready for the first major change. The aim is for the parent company to move the acquired company to Harmony SASE–the parent company in our scenario is already a customer. This will make it easier to combine networks later (if needed), and this step helps the IT team gain real-time visibility over both networks from one cloud dashboard. In addition, it helps keep the networks stable, since while they may be under the Harmony SASE umbrella, they will effectively operate independently for a smoother primary transition. Just how independently they operate depends on your particular circumstances.

There are many different requirements for businesses undergoing a merger, but it's often a gradual process. Check Point's Infinity Portal enables companies to take the time they need to go from intermediate to a fully completed consolidation.

Intermediate Separation

To start, we recommend that IT teams define the new acquisition as a separate network within the parent organization's current Harmony SASE dashboard.

Under this scenario, the new users will be added to the parent company's Harmony SASE account and given a separate network from the Networks dashboard. From the end user's point of view all resource access will be separate. For the IT Manager, however, it will operate as a single company with combined team rosters, IDPs, and logs. Firewall wall rules, meanwhile, are separate for each network; however, they are still managed from the same panel within the management console.

The multiple networks approach also helps avoid IP address overlaps between resources as each internal resource exists on a separate network—giving you the opportunity to resolve these issues before a complete merger between networks.

Let's create a simple example to illustrate how this would work in practice. The National Stapler Company (NSC) just acquired International Staples (IS). The two companies are excited about the possibilities of remaking the stapler market worldwide with a variety of new staple types and advanced, next-generation staples.

NSC is already a Harmony SASE customer, and they are creating a separate network inside their Harmony SASE dashboard for IS.

Before all that magic can happen, however, they need to join their networks. NSC is already a Harmony SASE customer, and they are creating a separate network inside their Harmony SASE dashboard for IS.

So, they create a new network called IS-Temp and assign all IS employees to a group called IS-Corporate.

Sysadmins and IT Managers can easily observe the IS network, see who's accessing what, and use secure Internet Access to protect the network from malicious threats.

Now that we have two or more networks under the same umbrella, we can keep them running on their own to ensure stability, and leave them that way, or move towards a complete merger with a single network.

Transitioning to a Single Network

After the M&A has passed regulatory scrutiny, or the IT team is confident that all corporate networks are stable under Harmony SASE, you can start moving the acquired company's assets into the parent organization's Harmony SASE network.

To start, we'd suggest connecting the acquired company's cloud services to the parent company's network since each service can be transitioned relatively quickly.

Moving on-premises resources from one Harmony SASE network to another can also be done efficiently; however, we recommend taking the merger slowly since on-prem resources can be more prone to configuration issues.

 Harmony SASE's management platform is extremely intuitive and streamlined to help even the most complex networks work more efficiently. Our award-winning support team and account managers are also ready to help with any issues that come up. We also offer advanced support services to help maintain and run your network smoothly.

Next Steps

With a completed transition to a single network, or set of networks under the Harmony SASE umbrella, some recommended next steps include adding granular Zero Trust Access rules and Device Posture Checks. This will add greater security for the entire organization and mitigate potential breaches should threat actors illicitly obtain company login credentials.

We'd also highly recommend following in the footsteps of National Stapler Company and adding secure Internet Access to ensure fast connections, and to protect employees from malicious websites, and secure your network against malware attacks.

Whichever network security features you implement, the Harmony SASE team is here to help. Should you have any issues with a network transition please don't hesitate to reach out to your Customer Success Manager or contact our support team directly.

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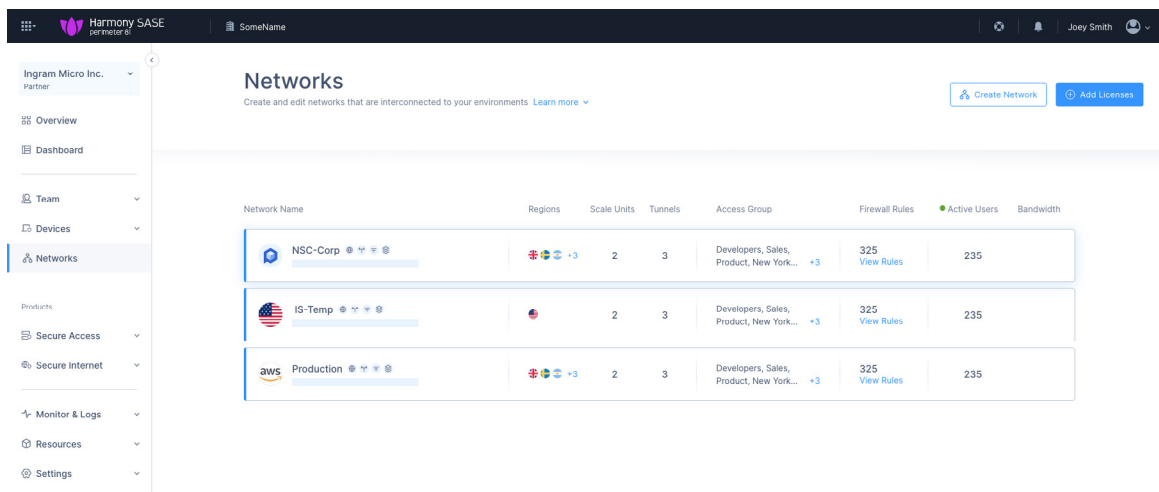
Meet Harmony SASE

2x Faster Internet Security | Full Mesh Private Access | Secure SD-WAN

The internet is the new corporate network, leading organizations to transition to SASE. However current solutions break the user experience with slow connections and complex management.

Harmony SASE is a game-changing solution that delivers 2x faster internet security combined with full mesh Zero Trust Access and optimized SD-WAN performance—all with an emphasis on ease-of-use and streamlined management.

Combining innovative on-device and cloud-delivered network protections, Harmony SASE offers a local browsing experience with tighter security and privacy, and an identity-centric zero trust access policy that accommodates everyone: employees, BYOD and third parties. Its SD-WAN solution unifies industry-leading threat prevention with optimized connectivity, automated steering for over 10,000 applications and seamless link failover for uninterrupted web conferencing.

Harmony SASE enables any business to build a secure corporate network over a private global backbone in less than an hour. The service is managed from a unified console and is backed by an award-winning global support team that has you covered 24/7.
Harmony SASE is part of the Harmony for Workspace Suite. Harmony helps organizations of all sizes secure their workspaces with a suite of products including SASE, SaaS protection, email security, endpoint and mobile protection, and in-browser security.

To learn more, visit https://www.checkpoint.com/harmony/sase/

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